

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

I care about animals and I vote. I'm writing to: 1) **SUPPORT SB 239** (which would ban certain rodenticides) and **OPPOSE HB 5295** (promotes rabbit slaughter).

Please SUPPORT SB 239, An Act Prohibiting the Use of Certain Rodenticides for the Protection of Hawks, Raptors and Other Wildlife. There are innovative, humane solutions to these problems, like exclusion/sanitation, botanical repellants, and fertility control. These anticoagulant toxins (FGARs and SGARs) poison the entire food chain, posing dangers to wildlife and our pets, and should be banned on both state and private land.

Please OPPOSE HB 5295, An Act Concerning Agriculture Development and Innovation. This bill contains the same language pertaining to rabbit slaughter as was in HB 5263, An Act Concerning the Processing of Rabbits for Consumption, which just had a public hearing on 3/1/22. Over 100 testimonies were filed in OPPOSITION to HB 5263. I respectfully ask that the Environment Committee consider these HB 5263 testimonies as relevant to HB 5295. This redundant public hearing is a corruption of the normal process and highly confusing to voters.

There is no demand for rabbit meat. Whole Foods tried selling it a few years ago, and stopped after vigorous public condemnation. Rabbits are the third most popular companion animal, behind dogs and cats. Further, HB 5295 moves us in the wrong direction by introducing a new form of cruel factory farming. Connecticut already has cruel, large-scale factory farms: Hillandale Egg Farm in eastern Connecticut intensively confines millions of birds in battery cages. These birds spend their unnaturally short lifetimes languishing in crowded wire cages that frustrate nearly every natural instinct. We should not extend such obscene cruelty to another species.

If passed, HB 5295 and/or HB 5263 may exacerbate the spread of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV), a highly transmissible and fatal disease for wild and domestic rabbits that is currently spreading across the country.

In light of the emerging viral threats that jump the species barrier from animals to humans, Connecticut's Department of Agriculture should instead be promoting plant-based markets, including expansion and innovation of plant-based proteins (and eventually cultivated meat), to ensure a greater availability of more diverse, safe, and dependable protein sources.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Roopa Rajaramadoss

East Hartford, CT
